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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study summarized here was to determine which administrator competencies were ranked as most important to job performance by administrators at various levels of administrative activity. The instrument used was the Performance Evaluation of the Educational Leader (PEEL) list of competencies. Questionnaires were sent to four administrators in each of 260 districts across the United States. Results indicated that the competency of communicating with parents and other school patrons for the support of the school and its programs was perceived by all administrators in all categories as the most important of all competency statements. Central office personnel placed greater importance on aspects of their job dealing with community involvement. Building level administrators placed greater importance on aspects of their job that deal directly with student-oriented responsibilities than do central office personnel. Implications of the study include using the identified competencies in the design of inservice and preservice training activities. It was recommended that the questionnaire also be administered to administrators in districts of enrollment under 10,000, to administrators at other levels, and to groups other than administrators. (Author/JM)

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PRIORITIZATIONS OF COMPETENCIES BY ADMINISTRATORS AT VARIOUS LEVELS OF ACTIVITY

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FOREWORD

This study represents the second issue of Research Reports on Educational Administration for Volume VII, 1976-77. Through the series, the Bureau of Educational Research and Services has brought timely, significant and relevant research to the desks of practicing school administrators in Arizona.

The investigation by Dr. James E. Jurs was concerned with an examination of the competency statements of the PEEL (Performance Evaluation of the Educational Leader) definition of administrative competence and how administrators from 260 school districts throughout the United States would rank them in importance to job performance.

Other dissertations which have been summarized and published in this series are listed on the inside back cover. All dissertations from which summaries are derived are available on interlibrary loan and may be obtained from any library upon application to the Director of Libraries, Arizona State University, Tempe, Arizona 85281. All dissertations are also available on microfilm from University Microfilm, Inc., 300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106.

HJD
GEB

PRIORITIZATIONS OF COMPETENCIES BY ADMINISTRATORS AT VARIOUS LEVELS OF ACTIVITY

INTRODUCTION

The competencies of public school administrators are coming under increasing focus at both the pre- and in-service levels. With this emphasis, there is a need to investigate the competencies perceived by the practicing administrators at various levels of administrative activity.

Many universities are currently wrestling with the idea of altering their administrator preparation programs so as to embrace the competency-based approach. One of the main roadblocks to their acceptance of the competency approach has been the identification and acceptance of precise competency statements to which a broad spectrum of administrators can agree.

The problem of locating a set of competencies related to educational administration, which had content and face validity, was alleviated by the doctoral study of Metzger (1975). This study revealed that the seven areas of competence as discussed in the PEEL (Performance Evaluation of the Educational Leader) definition* comprise a comprehensive description of the administrator's role, and that the competency statements and descriptions of the PEEL definition are representative of the professional behavioral range within each of the seven areas of competence.

THE PROBLEM

The problem of this study was to determine which (PEEL) competency statements for administrative performance were ranked as most important to job performance by administrators at various levels of administrative activity (present position, population within school district's boundaries, years of educational experience, highest academic degree, major field of highest academic degree, and sex).

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*Guidelines for Evaluation: The School Administrator--Seven Areas of Competence, (H. J. Demeke author/researcher), Tempe: Arizona State University, Department of Educational Administration and Supervision, 1972.

PROCEDURE

This study took the form of a descriptive research project, using a national correlational survey, which in turn took the form of an activity analysis.

The population was all public school districts in the United States with a K-12 organizational pattern and a student enrollment of 10,000 or more. There were 717 districts which met this criteria. A random sample of 260 districts were selected as survey participants. Within each of these districts one principal from each of the elementary, junior high and high schools and a superintendency level staff member were used.

The instrument was the seven areas of competence included in the PEEL definition. Each of the areas and its related five to seven main competency statements was printed on a separate page of the survey instrument. The respondent was asked to prioritize each of the competency statements, within each area, from one (most important to his job performance) to 5, 6, or 7 (least important to his job performance) depending upon the number of main competency statements within the major area of competence. The respondent was then requested to go back and check as many or few of the competency statements in each of the seven areas of competence as they perceived to be "Most Critical" (i.e., indispensable) to the successful performance of the responsibilities of their current position.

The following statistical tests were used in this study: FREQN, frequency distribution test; analysis of variance F-test; and multivariate analysis of variance.

FINDINGS

1. The questionnaires were sent to four administrators in each of 260 districts across the United States. Altogether, 80.76% of the districts originally contacted responded to this study. This accounted for an actual return rate of 60% with 52.4% of the questionnaires being valid and usable.

2. The interactions of the independent variables (administrative activities) did not cause the appearance of significantly different prioritization patterns.

3. The competency of communicating effectively with parents and other school patrons for the support of the school and its programs (statement 3 of Area 4) was perceived by all administrators in all categories as the most important of all 39 statements.

4. The competency statements perceived to be "most critical" (important to the administrator's success) from each of the seven areas of PEEL were as follows:

Area 1
(Leader and Director of the Educational Program)

"Facilitates staff involvement in program development" (statement 1).

Area 2
(Coordinator of Guidance and Special Educational Services)

"Encourages and assists professional staff to help children develop realistic and positive self-concepts" (statement 1).

Area 3
(Member of the School Staff)

"Provides leadership in the development of a total curriculum and educational policies at all levels" (statement 5).

Area 4
(Link Between the Community and the School)

"Communicates effectively, with parents and other school patrons, to secure favorable understanding and support for the school and its program" (statement 3).

Area 5
(Administrator of Personnel)

"Participates in the selection and assignment of personnel" (statement 1).

Area 6
(Member of the Profession of Educational Administration)

"Assumes personal responsibility for his own professional development" (statement 4).

Area 7
(Director of Support Management)

"Understands and accepts scope of authority" (statement 4).

CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions were drawn on the basis of the results of the data which were collected in connection with this study and the statistical tests which were performed on them:

1. Administrators at various levels of activity (superintendency level staff, senior high, junior high and elementary principals) display agreement within groups concerning the priority assigned to a set of competency statements for administrative performance.

2. When analyzed between groups, differences are indicated in the perception of the importance of competency statements between building level administrators (principals at all levels) and superintendency level staff members.

3. Superintendency level staff members place greater importance on aspects of their job which deal with community involvement and district-wide responsibilities than do building level administrators.

4. Building level administrators place greater importance on aspects of their job which deal directly with student-oriented responsibilities than do superintendency level staff members.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations may be made as a result of the conclusions drawn from this study:

> The results of this study should be analyzed by pre- and in-service program planners when considering administrative training programs. This would provide direction to such planners in their attempts to arrive at meaningful and relevant programs.

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations for further study were made:

1. This study should be replicated for school districts with student enrollments of less than 10,000. A comparison could then be made between the results of such a study and the present study.

2. Other administrative levels (assistant principals, supervisors, coordinators and Deans of students) should be studied as to the priorities they hold for these competency statements.

3. Other groups such as professors of educational administration, school board members, or parents should be surveyed as to the priorities they would assign to these competency statements. A comparison between the results of such a study and the present study could then be made.

IMPLICATIONS

The following implications were drawn from the study:

1. Inasmuch as the educational administrators agree with respect to the level of importance of various competency statements, they should be analyzed by program planners at both the pre- and in-service levels to determine meaningful and relevant study topics.

2. Those who design programs for one specific level of administrative activity should consider the fact that although administrators, as a total group agree on the relative importance of various competency statements in the PEEL definition, administrators do place different emphases on statements as a function of their present position.

3. Program planners need not be overly concerned that participants may have divergent training or experience levels, or are employed in different size districts; the different priorities (related to their position) which they tend to allocate to selected competency statements will be predictable.

4. Planners who are responsible for designing in-service programs for the superintendency level staff members who have "line" responsibility should be cognizant of the fact that these administrators consider community involvement and district-wide responsibilities as more important to their professional performance than do building level administrators.

5. Those who design in-service programs for building level administrators should be aware that these administrators consider student-oriented responsibilities to be of more importance to their professional performance than do superintendency level administrators.

6. Awareness by district-level and building-level (line) administrators that their respective groups attach different degrees of importance to community/district responsibilities and student-oriented responsibilities, respectively, should further mutual understanding and cooperation.

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